

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR CPAS LY SZ

SUBJECT: PASSPORT PROBLEM: HOME TRUTHS FROM SWITZERLAND

REF: TRIPOLI 0932

1. AFTERSWISS CHARGE TRIPOLI EXCLUDED FROM LIBYA SOME MONTHS AGO BECAUSE NO ARABIC IN HIS PASSPORT, AND HIS SECRETARY SIMILARLY EXCLUDED, SWISS GOVT APPARENTLY CAME WITHIN AN ACE OF CLOSING ITS MISSION TRIPOLI. HOWEVER A DECISION MADE TO TRY KEEP IT OPEN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY BY RUBBER STAMPING THOSE PASSPORTS NEEDED BY MISSION STAFF, WHO HAVE NOW RETURNED TO TRIPOLI. CHARGE ZELLWEGER TELLS ME ONLY THREE SWISS PASSPORTS SO STAMPED AND LARG ANNOUNCEMENT OF JULY THAT SWISS ACCEPTED ARABIC (REFTEL) IS OTHERWISE FALSE.

2. ZELLWEGER PROVIDED US WITH COPY OF NOTE DATED AUGUST 28 HE DRAFTED AND DELIVERED TO MFA, PRESUMABLY ON INSTRUCTIONS. BELIEVE IT WORTH QUTOING IN TOTO AS AN EXHIBIT FOR THE NO-PUNCHES-PULLED DEPARTMENT:

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"THE SWISS EMBASSY PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE LIBYAN ARAB REPUBLIC AND HAS THE HONOR TO REFER TO THE MINISTRY'S COMMUNICATION NO 3/5/16/3320 OF 9 JULY, 1973, CONCERNING THE USE OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE IN FOREIGN, I.E. NON-ARABIC PASSPORTS. MR. ROBERT ZELLWEGER, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, HAVING HAD, ON 27 AUGUST, A CONVERSATION ON THIS SUBJECT WITH MR. NAGIB SHEYBANI, DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPE DEPARTMENT, THE EMBASSY CONFIRMS ITS CONTENTS AS FOLLOWS:

"THE SWISS AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT A PASSPORT IS TO BE CONSIDERED AS AN INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DOCUMENT WHICH, BESIDE THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, SHOULD INCLUDE A LANGUAGE WHICH IS READ AND SPOKEN WORLD-WIDE, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE JOURNEYS ABROAD OF ITS HOLDER. ARABIC, OF WHICH THE LINGUISTIC USAGE IS LIMITED TO ARAB COUNTRIES, HAS SO FAR NOT BEEN RECOGNIZED AS AN INTERNATIONAL OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGE. EVEN IF THAT WOULD BE SO, A PASSPORT BEING ENDORSED WITH A RUBBER STAMP IN ARABIC, DOES NOT HAVE THE MEANING OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

"ACCORDINGLY, THE DEMAND OF THE LIBYAN AUTHORITIES TO RECORD ARABIC LANGUAGE ON FOREIGN NON-ARABIC PASSPORTS IS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THE PRINCIPLES WHICH GUIDE A TRAVEL DOCUMENT, THAT IS TO SAY, ITS REAL MEANING AND PURPOSE, BOTH INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED AND APPLIED. THE MEASURES THE LIBYAN AUTHORITIES HAVE JUDGED APPROPRIATE TO ADOPT ARE ALL THE MORE PREJUDICIAL AS THEIR VALIDITY IS EXTENDED BUT TO A LIMITED CATEGORY OF NON-ARABIC FOREIGNERS, WHEREAS MANY OTHERS BEING OF THE SAME NATIONALITY AS THE DISCRIMINATED PERSONS, ARE ADMITTED INTO LIBYA WITHOUT THE OBLIGATION OF PRODUCING THE QUESTIONABLE RUBBER STAMP.

"THE SWISS AUTHORITIES, GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF GOOD RELATIONSHIP TO ALL COUNTRIES, DO HOWEVER CONSIDER IT INDISPENSABLE, FOR REASONS GIVEN ABOVE, TO INSIST MOST EARNESTLY ON THE NECESSITY OF ALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SWISS CITIZENS ENTERING LIBYA BEING EXEMPT FROM PRODUCING THE AFORESAID RUBBER STAMP IN THEIR NATIONAL PASSPORT, THAT IS TO SAY, BE GIVEN EQUALLY GOOD TREATMENT AS THE LIBYAN CITIZENS DO HAVE WHEN CROSSING THE SWISS BORDER.

"THE SWISS EMBASSY WILL BE OBLIGED FOR AN EARLY REPLY AND (CLOSING COMPLIMENTS)."

JOSIF

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